

Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation: Public Comment Research Findings



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Overview and Methodology

The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) retained McKinley Advisors to assess the public feedback on a proposed set of accreditation standards. More than 500 responses were collected primarily via an online survey during the public opinion period, which ran from February 22, 2013 through April 5, 2013. The online survey tool was built and managed by MarketSmart.

The online survey aimed to capture feedback from CAEP's primary constituents on the five major standards. In addition, the survey explored topics such as the validity of the cited evidence, the value of the proposed reporting and monitoring, and the viability of an "exemplary" level of accreditation. Feedback was collected, analyzed, and subsequently reported from the following audiences:

- Alternate pathway professionals (7)
- Association staff (36)
- Discipline-specific faculty (22)
- Education faculty (340)
- Educator-candidates (2)
- Federal/state policymaker/agency staff (16)
- Parents (2)
- P-12 educators (37)
- Other/Didn't disclose (85)

It should be noted that participation rates varied significantly among the distinct audiences. Participation was highest among education faculty, with more than 60 percent of respondents self-identifying as part of this audience. Conversely, only 3 percent of respondents self-identified as policymakers, and 7 percent as association staff.



Overall Standard and Recommendation Rankings

	Standard 1	Standard 2	Standard 3	Standard 4	Standard 5
Appropriately describes expectations <i>(On a scale of 1-5, 1=Not at all, 5=Completely)</i>	Mean: 3.87	3.86	3.26	3.18	3.51
	Median: 4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00
	Top Two Score*: 71%	70%	44%	46%	55%
Completely address educators' needs <i>(On a scale of 1-5, 1=Incomplete, 5=Complete)</i>	Mean: 3.67	3.8	3.17	3.13	3.44
	Median: 4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00
	Top Two Score*: 61%	76%	42%	46%	55%
Evidence Rating <i>(Accurately Demonstrating Standard on a scale 1-5, 1=Not well at all, 5=Very well)</i>	3.46	3.6	3.21	3.00	3.38
	Top Two Score*: 51%	62%	42%	38%	41%

*Top Two Score represents the percentage of total respondents who ranked the standard and its components as a "4" or "5" on a five-point scale, implying high satisfaction.

Respondents' Feedback on Recommendations:		
	Annual Reporting <i>(In terms of being a valuable improvement on a scale 1-5, 1-Not all Valuable, 5=Extremely Valuable)</i>	Levels of Accreditation <i>(In terms of being a valuable improvement on a scale 1-5, 1-Not all Valuable, 5=Extremely Valuable)</i>
Overall Rating (Mean)	Mean: 3.13	2.91
Overall Rating (Median)	Median: 3	3



Standard 1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

The respondents were generally very satisfied with Standard 1. More than seven-in-ten of all respondents (71%) ranked the standard as appropriately challenging in terms of content and pedagogical knowledge and 61 percent of respondents felt the standard completely addressed educators' needs in this area. The rating on the evidence component of the standard was a bit lower, as about half (51%) of respondents ranked it as a four or five on the five-point satisfaction scale.

More than one-quarter of respondents (27%) wrote about their desire to see an increased emphasis on diversity and equity throughout the standard. Many discussed their preference for having a separate standard completely dedicated to the issues of diversity and equity.

While many comments reflected an appreciation for the inclusion of building relationships with families and the community in the standard, concerns about its measurability and feasibility were mentioned by 23 percent of respondents.

The majority of the feedback submitted by respondents (40%) related to evidence for this standard was in regard to the concern of using GPA and other standardized tests as proof of mastery of content and pedagogical knowledge. Some concerns centered around the subjectivity of GPAs at varying providers, while others questioned the inclusion of such requirements without substantial evidence to support the correlation between high GPAs/standardized test scores and effective mastery of content knowledge, and thereby effective teaching practices.

The other theme surrounding Standard 1's evidence related to the P-12 student surveys. Many of the respondents concerned with the inclusion of surveys (24%) discussed their desire to see clear evidence that links student surveys to the effectiveness of teachers. Others voiced their concerns about the feasibility of such a measure, considering the young age of the audience, and their corresponding literacy levels and privacy rights when it comes to research.



Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice

More than 70 percent of respondents rated the standard as having appropriately demanding expectations and addressing educators' needs in terms of clinical partnerships and practice. Standard 2 received the highest rating for its evidence component as well, with 62 percent of respondents satisfied with the proposed measures.

The majority of responses expressed their support for the idea of partnerships but desired more in terms of clarification, examples, and rubrics. Almost four-in-ten responses (37%) related to the need for more information in the clinical partnership process. Many respondents discussed their desire for additional rigor and clarification around participating P-12 programs, in terms of responsibilities, qualification requirements, and specific examples of desired outcomes and evidence.

Additionally, many respondents, while supportive of the idea of partnerships in theory, were concerned about the actual implementation. The primary concerns centered on the feasibility and willingness of P-12 educators to participate in clinical partnerships given the limited time and resources available to them. The lack of clarity about the implementation of the clinical partnerships carried through to the evidence, as well. Thirty-seven percent of respondents had questions relating to how certain aspects of the partnership will be measured, and many requested that additional information and examples be provided to bring more clarity to the outlined evidence. Others discussed the importance of including feedback from multiple stakeholders throughout the process or incorporating some aspect of personal reflection.

Additionally, the respondents viewed the evidence as presenting data collection challenges. About one-quarter of all responses focused on the limitations and challenges of meeting this standard, particularly around collecting and sharing data from partner institutions and the state. Concerns centered on the lack of resources many P-12 schools have to track certain data points, such as hiring rates, while others voiced their uncertainty about retrieving information due to privacy laws.

The specific mention of the use of technology as a tool caused concern for about 16 percent of respondents. Although many thought the concept was good in theory, the limitations of many schools and their technological capabilities were cited by respondents.



Standard 3: Candidate Quality, Recruitment and Selectivity of Candidates

Compared to the previous two standards, Standard 3 was not ranked as highly in terms of having appropriately challenging expectations and addressing educators' needs in relation to candidate quality, recruitment, and selectivity of candidates. For all three ranking questions, less than one-half (43%) of respondents ranked their satisfaction with the standard as a four or five on a five-point scale. Many themes and suggestions emerged from respondents around opportunities for improvement.

The majority of comments submitted for Standard 3 related to the use of GPA and standardized testing. Four-in-ten responses (40%) centered around the concern that increased admissions requirements could have a negative effect on the applicant pool in terms of diversity. While some expressed their support of increased selectivity standards, they were more concerned with ensuring certain populations would not be disenfranchised by selectivity requirements.

An additional 23 percent of responses also focused on the GPA and standardized testing requirements in terms of their validity and correlation with predicting the effectiveness of teachers. The majority of these comments questioned the validity of using GPA or standardized test scores to accurately predict the effectiveness of a candidate as a teacher. Many responses cited cases where candidates were exceptional teachers, but may not have had the highest test scores. Interestingly, many respondents agreed that high-achieving candidates were desirable but barring other students from the program due to lower test scores was not widely supported.

The other major theme in the submitted feedback related to the many external factors that might hinder the ability of providers to recruit candidates in line with heightened recruitment requirements. The relatively low compensation rate for teachers in relation to competing career paths makes it difficult to recruit top-quality candidates. In addition, the location and resources of providers differ greatly, affecting their ability to attract candidates that meet the components of this standard.



Standard 4: Program Impact

Standard 4 ranked very closely to Standard 3 in terms of overall satisfaction with the components and evidence. Less than half of respondents (46%) ranked the standard as a four or five in terms of appropriately challenging expectations and addressing educators' needs. Similarly, the overall satisfaction with the evidence provided was the lowest of all the standards. About 38 percent believed the evidence provided would be able to accurately demonstrate that the standard was being met.

The majority of responses focused on the limitations faced when attempting to collect and compile the data required by Standard 4. Respondents were concerned about their ability to access data, since much of it was held at the state level, and there was uncertainty around the privacy and confidentiality of certain metrics. Others discussed their inability to track students if they leave the state. Many educator preparation providers and association staff discussed the challenges faced in terms of data collection between states, and some hinted at CAEP possibly playing a role in facilitating relationships between states and providers to allow for increased data sharing.

Many of the responses revolved around the concept of value-added measures. Approximately one-third of responses (32%) mentioned the controversial nature of using such measures due to the lack of validity and reliability. Although many respondents did in fact believe that value-added measures would be the best way to demonstrate impact, there was concern about using these measures without supporting evidence or without considering outside factors.

Standard 5: Provider Quality, Continuous Improvement and Capacity

On average, more than half (55%) of the respondents ranked Standard 5 as having appropriately challenging expectations and completely addressing educators' needs. Although the evidence rating was a bit lower, around 51 percent felt the evidence demonstrated completion of the standard "well" or "very well."

The majority of comments focused on the concept of using student loan default rates as a metric. Almost half (43%) of respondents were unclear about the use of this metric and its correlation to provider quality. About one-quarter of responses (24%) voiced their concern over the inclusion of employment rates and career choices as a metric for Standard 5. The majority of these respondents cited their concern with this measurement due to their lack of influence on the employment market and overall economy.



Annual Reporting

More than four-in-ten (42%) respondents rated their satisfaction with the annual reporting requirements as a four or five on the five-point scale.

About 20 percent of the respondents cited concern over the large investment of time and money seen as being necessary to meet the annual reporting requirements. Some respondents requested that the annual reporting process instead be a bi- or tri-annual reporting process in order to give providers a bit more time to collect and analyze data. Others supported the suggestion to expand the reporting process over the course of two to three years in order to see more accurate trends and enable change to happen at a provider level.

The other major theme relating to the annual reporting requirements focused on the validity of the required data and the feasibility of capturing that data. Many were concerned with their ability to actually collect the data points required, given that much of it relies on the participation of P-12 schools and the state. Others again indicated their inability to track candidates once they have left the state.

Levels of Accreditation

Thirty-six percent of respondents gave the levels of accreditation laid out a four or five on the five-point scale. Although about 15 percent of respondents contributed positive feedback relating to the levels of accreditation (in particular how an “exemplary” level could create a positive example), almost 30 percent expressed their lack of support for the additional level through the open-ended comments. Much of the feedback focused on the competition and divisions that could occur when an additional level was added.

Some respondents believed providers should either be accredited or not if they meet the standards and the extra level may not represent anything significant, while others were concerned how a “gold” level might be interpreted by the public, possibly creating negative consequences in terms of recruitment for those providers who weren’t up to “gold” level standard.



Implementation

The last question on the public comment survey related to issues CAEP should keep in mind during the implementation stage of the standards. Nearly one-third of respondents (29%) discussed their need for additional time and resources while implementing the new set of standards. Many also mentioned the importance of training for all related stakeholders in the process to ensure everyone would be on the same page during implementation.

About two-in-ten respondents (19%) specifically cited the inclusion of other stakeholders in the process to ensure everyone's voice would be heard. This belief was particularly held by P-12 educators.

Lastly, it was very important to respondents that the size, location, and previous relationships with other accrediting bodies (i.e., TEAC, NCATE, etc.) be considered during the implementation stage with each unique provider. Naturally, the discipline-specific professions encouraged CAEP to acknowledge the many differences that exist between providers, specifically differences in missions, resources, size, location, and populations served.

Improvements and Additions to Standards

The following were collected in response to the question: "Now that you have read through each of the standards, is there anything you would add or change to improve these standards as a whole?"

- Thirty-eight percent of comments related to expanding the scope of the standards to ensure the diversity component would be consistent throughout the entire document and all-encompassing.
- Twenty-two percent of respondents had concern about the feasibility of collecting the data and the validity and correlation of certain metrics with the quality of teachers.
- More than 20 percent of respondents voiced their concern for the reality of these standards. Although many thought they would be ideal in a perfect world, respondents were concerned about the amount of time and resources needed to implement the proposed standards.
- Nearly two-in-ten respondents (17%) wanted more detail and definition around the standards, specifically surrounding the expectations and evidence necessary.
- Sixteen percent of respondents reinforced their opinions that simply using GPA or standardized test scores would be highly subjective and possibly disenfranchise certain populations.

